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AN

# ADDRESS,

TO THE

*FREEMEN OF RHODE-ISLAND.*

BY

A LANDHOLDER.

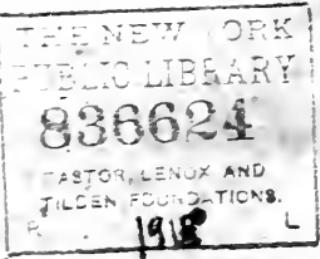
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## AN ADDRESS.

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### TO THE FREEMEN OF RHODE-ISLAND,

On the twentieth of April next, you will again select your rulers for the ensuing political year.

Although I am no preacher, I shall take the liberty on this occasion to take a text, which you may find in Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, (vol. 1. 3. 3.) in the words following: "Examine the Records of History, recollect what has happened within the circle of your own experience, consider with attention what has been the conduct of all the greatly unfortunate, either in public or private life, whom you have either read of, heard of or remember, and you will find, that the misfortunes of by far the greatest part of them, have arisen from their not knowing when they were well off, when it was proper for them to sit still and be contented. The inscription upon the tombstone of the man who had endeavoured to mend a tolerable constitution by taking physic, "I WAS WELL, I WISHED TO BE BETTER; HERE I AM:" may generally be applied with great justness to the distress of disappointed avarice and ambition."

Although I may not handle my text with much skill on this occasion, I would recommend it to your serious consideration, as it may answer a good purpose in politics and business, as well as in sickness and in health.

You are now called upon by a party heretofore unknown in this State, the leaders and most active of whom are neither of the whole or half blood of our native citizens; and have no settlement among us either by purchase or inheritance; to turn out our present Governor, together with the Senate, and put in his place, a young gentlemen from Vermont.

When a man, who has served the public as long and as well as Governor Fenner, and for a very small compensation, is to be opposed, the first questions that occur are—what has he done? and who are his accusers? It has been said that he and the members of the Senate have aided a few members of the House of Representatives, in establishing and continuing a system of internal taxes for nearly ten years past; by which means, the sum of ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY SEVEN THOUSAND SEVENTY EIGHT DOLLARS AND SEVENTY CENTS, have been col-

lected and paid into the treasury. This sum has been paid voluntarily, as no man is obliged to hold his Bank charter, buy a ticket in a lottery, or take a license for any purpose, unless he pleases; and it has kept the same sums for the same time from being paid by the Landholders of this State, exclusively and by compulsion.

The question is now fairly before you to settle, whether you will aid this NATIONAL PARTY (as they call themselves) in turning out the Governor, and pay two hundred thousand dollars by land tax exclusively for the next ten years, to support the Government,—or, whether, you will help the State Republican party keep him in, and pay the taxes as they are now paid. This you will find the whole question at issue. If the Landholders should so far forget their own interest, and what is due to themselves and families, as to join the NATIONALS and turn out the present Governor and Senate, they will find out when it is too late, what Pyrrhus, a celebrated General and King of Epirus said; after he had obtained a great victory over the Romans, (many being slain on both sides) "that such another victory would totally ruin him."

You are no doubt conversant with the Scriptures. If so you will find a passage that you may hereafter have cause to remember, if you neglect to take care of yourselves at this time. It is in these words: "There went out a decree in the days Claudio Cæsar, that all the world should be taxed." Let the NATIONALS get into power in this State, and they will soon issue a decree, *that all YOUR LAND shall be TAXED*, and all the *internal taxes ABOLISHED*.

When President Adams laid his land tax, the people in this State could hardly bear to hear his name mentioned.

If you now want to change your rulers, introduce strangers, increase your expenses and pay them all by a land tax, you will on the 20th day of April next, issue your decree accordingly. If you do not, hold on where you are, being well off, and having the power in your own hands, you will have abundant cause to remember my text—"we were well, we wished to be better; here we are."

Would any prudent shipowner having a ship returned from a long voyage with a valuable cargo, Captain and crew all well, ship in good order, having no portage bills to pay, when he got her again ready for sea, with a valuable cargo, bound to the same port, employ a young green hand for Captain (and the crew no better) who would be as likely to put to sea in a storm, as with a fair wind, and perhaps not find the port; until he had enquired of his old Captain and crew whether they would take charge of his ship again? and if they would take

charge of it again, which ought he to employ? Your honest answer to this question ought to be your guide at the ensuing election. If he did not take his old Captain and crew, he would have cause to remember my text;—

*"I had a ship with an experienced Captain and crew; I wanted a better; here I am without ship or cargo."*

Whenever prudence does not direct, or justice require you to attempt to change your rulers, or your situation in life, whatever it may be; those, who do attempt it, play at the most unequal game of hazard and stake every thing, against nothing. Those of you, who shall help change the administration in this State (if you should succeed) will lose to the State, about \$25,000, annually in internal taxes, and bring that sum on your land, which you must pay at all events.

Government has its origin in the weakness of individuals, and has for its object, the protection of the whole. *Money* must be had. The NATIONAL PARTY are strongest in the House of Representatives, and most of them have always been opposed to the whole system of internal taxes. Their opposition now is only smothered, because they know if they should pass an act to abolish the internal taxes and put on a land tax, that such an act would not pass the Senate. Turn out your present Governor and Senate, and the National party would soon issue their decree, that all your land should be taxed.

My advice to you is, when almost the whole civilized world is in a state of commotion, revolution and warfare, to be patient; consent to be happy and remain contented a little longer until those troubles subside, to pause and reflect upon what you are about to do before it is too late, as it is much easier to keep out of difficulty than to get out when you are in. And in public as in private affairs, you ought never to change a certainty for an uncertainty.

In changing the administration of this State (while you have nothing to complain of) you have every thing to lose, and nothing to gain, but a new high sounding title.

In France we hear of nothing but a republican, citizen King. In absolute governments, titles are on the decline, when in this little State it seems they are on the rise; as those, who come among us from other States, who now offer to school us in the science of government, and to take the whole trouble of governing ourselves, off of our hands, are not satisfied with being called merely *State Republicans*, but assume the sounding name of *NATIONALS*.

I believe that with all our money the Nation can look out for itself, and that we had better see to our own concerns. I should advise my brother farmers to support the present Prox.

er live in peace, until they would have a King to rule over them: Thus the NATIONALS tell us, that we have no native born citizen among us of education and talent, equal to the task of ruling us, and that we shall have no peace until we will accept one of their NATIONALS and a foreigner for a Governor. Some of the printers say we ought to change our Governor and Senate, because when any of them go to Washington and tell a Jackson man that this is a Clay state, they are reminded that our Governor and Senate are in favor of the present administration ; and that this is very *mortifying*. *Oh ! fie, fie, what a pity !* as my grandmother used to say ; has it come to this, that we must change our administration in this State every time some printer goes to Washington and is *mortified* at hearing the truth, or whenever they represent things for facts, that they know to be otherwise ? If so, miserably pitiful would be our condition, and we should be obliged to have a *weekly* instead of an annual election, and turn every man out of office who is not for Mr. Clay, of whose elevation to the Presidency, there is not the least probability, as three fourths of the freemen of the United States, have already rendered a verdict against him, and nine tenths will, before the election. Besides H. Clay, is too well advised to become the Candidate of the NATIONAL PARTY. He understands himself better than to risque the remnant of his fame in the hands of such a combination.

The fate of De Witt Clinton, whose ambition led him to aspire to the Presidency, before his proper time, will be sufficient to deter H. Clay, from being the disappointed victim of the COALITION.

I should think that after Mr. Clay had spent four or five years of the best of his life in standing in almost all the public places in his own state, haranguing the people, making speeches in favour of himself and against the President, delivering lectures on *war, pestilence and famine* at his barbecues, being an orator of persuasive eloquence, a great gallant, a great promoter of the *American System* and the cause of temperance, by eating roast pigs and increasing the consumption of whiskey, able and willing to play or fight to accommodate his constituents ; if after all this and with all these accomplishments, he cannot get the vote of his own state where he is well known, it is time for those who do not know him so well, to give him up and take some Jack at a pinch. I Should as soon think running against Eclipse with Purdy on his back for all I was worth with a horse that could not get out first when he run *alone*, as of running Mr. Clay for the Presidency against the present incumbent under such circumstances.

I have wandered from my text, but as it is the first and in all probability will be the last sermon I shall ever deliver, I must be excused. My intention was to confine myself to our state affairs and not to meddle with national politics. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. I had been inadvertently drawn off the subject by casting my eye on a newspaper. But whenever the great political contest for the Presidency shall arrive, I shall be willing to meet the NATIONALS in the field of reason, and if I cannot convince any reasonable man, who neither holds nor wishes for an office, it is more for his interest and the public good to support the present administration, than those opposed to it, I will vote with him against it.

The object of the present administration is to pay the national debt, which by strict economy they have reduced to about FORTY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. This will put that sum into circulation in the country; lower the rate of interest of money, and increase the value of land and produce; and enable the government to reduce the duties on all such articles as are not of the growth and manufacture of this country.

The object and policy of the opposition are to keep on the national debt, and all the duties and taxes for the purpose of making roads and canals, with your money, in the western country; to enable people, who either had their land given to them, or paid very little for it, to bring their produce here, at your expense and undersell you, who have given from ten to one hundred dollars per acre for your land. The experiments of internal improvements and what is falsely called the American System, which were actually before Congress in 1830, were estimated at about \$95,000,000. Had not a check been put upon these experiments, the national debt would have been augmented, and the very expenses of Government must have been defrayed by direct taxes. The administration is determined first to get out of debt, relieve the people from taxes, and, if a surplus of revenue remains after defraying the government expenses, to divide it among the States, that the Legislatures may appropriate it among their own citizens as their wisdom or necessity requires. This will be found to be the true American System, which you can all see and realize. Any man whose property is in farming land, who cannot choose between two such parties, is fit only to be a slave.

Fellow-citizens of Rhode-Island, you are descended from the real puritans, the purest of the pure, from those who were compelled to flee to this region from a reign of terror and a second persecution, and came hither "to demonstrate to

the world by lively experiment, that a most flourishing civil state may best stand and be maintained with a full liberty in religious concerns," without any compulsion or regulation by law; and their experiment has been hitherto successful. You have been in war, by sea and land, among the bravest of the brave; in peace, industrious, intelligent and honest; in commerce, enterprising; in manufacturing, skillful and persevering; and in every situation, good citizens. Your ancestors have left you a goodly inheritance, and you hold your rights, privileges and estates, by an honorable tenure. Your fathers gave them to their sons and they again to theirs; and I hope you will transmit them safely down to your succeeding heirs, saying to them "this is a land your forefathers sought as a place of rational liberty and religious toleration: as we have received it from them, so we leave it to you."

A public station is a situation that gives a man power and requires energy in him to do his duty to his country and his friends; and if he does not, but sleeps upon his post, he is as blamable as the man who goes over to the enemy in time of war. Judging what may be from what has been, you have every reason to believe that Gov. Fenner, who is a gentleman of sound mind, of *good common sense*, and great experience, with a liberal education and in every respect well qualified, will fearlessly do his duty according to the best of his understanding and to the promotion of the best interests of the State.

I would now seriously ask you what you have to expect from Mr. Arnold, if he should be chosen. If he should come over to our side and pursue the same measures with us, keep on the internal and keep off the land taxes, his own party would call him as great a traitor to them as Gen. Arnold was to his country, when he sold his brethren in arms for British gold. But he is an honorable man and cannot do it. I should have a very different opinion of him, if he could thus change sides. You have then, nothing to expect from his election, but an entire change in your revenue system, taxes and expenses. Else why all this party commotion? It cannot be for a mere title: the object is to effect an entire change in your system of government.

Whenever you choose men to office, you will be safest in choosing those whose interest is similar to yours; and then, if they impose any burden upon you, they do upon themselves at the same time. All Gov. Fenner's estate is in land, and if he takes care of himself he must of you.

What Mr. Arnold's property is in, I know not: I believe he has been a lawyer, a commission merchant, and a speculator in banks and turnpikes.

The NATIONALS say that Gov. Fenner has been in office

long enough, and ought to be turned out for that reason. They have been trying for several years and yet cannot find a native citizen among their whole party, (although they claim a very large majority and almost all the men of education, wealth, and talent on their side) but are obliged to go to Vermont and Massachusetts for candidates.

The opposition say that Gov. Fenner ought to be turned out because he is in favour of the present administration of the National Government. This comes with a very ill grace from those, who but a few years since held up, that if a man was opposed to any of the measures of Mr. Adams's administration, it disqualified him from holding any office in town or State; and who now are continually grumbling and telling us that it is an awful thing for the President to turn out defaulters and swindlers, and put his friends in office. These very men have taken upon themselves the name of NATIONAL REPUBLICANS, a name which they disgrace by opposing the national republican administration, chosen by more than three quarters of the freemen of the United States. And they say that Gov. Fenner ought to be turned out because he will not help them oppose the constitutional national government of his country, which his oath of office binds him to support; and because he will not help them abuse the man whom a very great majority of the Nation have seen fit to elect for their President, and will elect again, if his life is spared. I should as soon think of Belzebub with all his train of hypocrites and infidels, assuming the name of the only orthodox church, while in open rebellion and hostility to all the Christian Churches of whatever name or denomination, as of this opposition assuming the name of NATIONAL REPUBLICANS, while they are acting both openly and secretly against the only National Republican Government in existence.

I am not old enough to remember a great many years past; but have heard my grandfather tell how the country people were oppressed in the revolution by very heavy taxes to pay the interest of the State debt. Cattle were frequently sold at auction for taxes, for from five to seven dollars a head, and half of that went to pay costs. And when they attempted to have a new apportionment made, because some of the country towns paid more than the town of Providence; although the taxes were tyrannical, oppressive and unjust, such was the opposition to a new estimate, that it was three years before a vote could be obtained in the House of Representatives to take one; and at that time the country towns and their members were all united and had, as I understand, many able men among them.

What is the situation of the two parties in this State at this time? The country interest lessening and divided among themselves; few men of talents to vindicate or defend them in the House of Representatives. The other party who calls themselves NATIONALS and represent the monied interest, are increasing in numbers, wealth and talent, with a bank capital of nearly SEVEN MILLIONS to operate in their favor, besides all their notes, bonds and mortgages.

If this class of men in former times contended so long against what was so manifestly just, do you expect that now, if they get into power, they will continue the internal taxes, which they say are not only unjust but unconstitutional, and to get rid of which, they have already spent \$3,000, to try the case before the Supreme Court of the United States? This would be too much to expect of any men. What would have been your situation if they had succeeded in these five suits against the state? You would have had to pay all the money back by land tax with all the interest and costs.

What guarantee have you against these measures, if L. H. Arnold and his Senate are elected? He and some of them were members of the Assembly, in 1828-9, when the question was debated whether the 27th Section of the Act, relating to the collecting and assessing of taxes, should be repealed, and all property real and personal made liable to be assessed in taxes. What was his and their course on that occasion. They spoke and voted against the proposition. He then advocated the doctrine that corporations might hold property to an almost indefinite amount, and ought not to be assessed in taxes.

When a man sits down to mortgage his estate with all the formality of signing, sealing and delivering, it naturally causes some serious reflections. When you sign a prox in favor of the Nationals, you will find it the same in effect as a mortgage of your real estate for your part of the state debt and state expenses; as much so as though you had actually mortgaged it in a formal manner.

Annexed you have a list of the internal taxes, as they have been paid into the treasury, by which you will see, that of late, they have considerably increased. If the present Governor and Senate can be supported, this internal revenue will soon increase, so that the avails will support the State Government, pay your State debt, and support Free Schools. And remember, that your only refuge against oppression, in the last resort, is in your Governor and Senate. We have had no land tax in this State since 1822; and since that time the internal revenue system, as it is called, has produced the following sums, annually :

Year ending May,	1822,	\$ 8,039	77 cts.
- - -	1823,	16,482	76 -
- - -	1824,	23,731	37 -
- - -	1825,	18,610	38 -
- - -	1826,	8,534	24 -
- - -	1827,	14,403	37 -
- - -	1828,	28,239	47 -
- - -	1829,	28,651	56 -
- - -	1830,	30,959	98 -
Six months, ending Oct. 1830,	19,365	80	

Sum total, \$197,018 70

If the revenue for the current half year equals that of the last, you will perceive an increase of about \$8000 over that of the last year. Thus, are all the expenses of government met and defrayed without direct taxation. Having now got through with my text, it only remains for me to make some few remarks by way of *application*, and then leave you in your own hands, as you have the power to protect or ruin yourselves.

But for the editors of the Journal and American, there would have been no opposition to the Governor the last year or this. These men disagree about most things. But although they appear to differ by day-light, yet they can unite at midnight in *secret* conclave, for your destruction. They have learnt (in the words of the Apostle) to "become all things to all men." One of them indeed seems to have more liberality than the other, and is not for condemning a whole society, because all its members are not perfect, nor for calling all men tiplers and drunkards merely because they have a license to retail liquor. The other, having been uncommonly *moral*, *honest* and *temperate* himself, has no charity for *bankrupts*, *freemasons*, or those who buy or sell strong drink. Notwithstanding their apparent division, they and their employers have agreed to join together to effect your downfall. The country is filled with their papers without expense to those, to whom they are sent. *Who pays for them?* You can hardly see a countryman take off his hat but it is full of them.

This is written by a landholder who, is in debt for his land ; and it is addressed to *landholders* whether they are masons or anti-masons ; tariff or anti-tariff ; Jackson, Adams or Clay men ; administration or opposition men. These are all names of little consequence to you, compared with your homes and families. It is best to try one question at a time. The question now on trial is—whether you shall pay a heavy land tax, which will continue and increase as long as you live,—or not. And, if it goes against you this time, remember you can have no appeal or new trial.

property and the right of self government : we have powerful enemies in the field who will spare neither money nor pains. *But our cause is a glorious one, and we must unite, fight and conquer, or consent to be slaves.*

## A LANDHOLDER.







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